/17 cont./

are not going to talk about what we have heard; we have lived long years with the Indians and we speak from daily, intimate experience, which obliges us to speak the truth even though bullets may keep on flying.

We have not come to break spears in favor of the Indians, but in favor of the truth. This idea of the innate laziness of the Indians we believe to be the twin sister of the "black legend" about the Spaniards, against which of little avail have been the voices of Maetzu, Juderías, Bayle, Lummis, etc. Perhaps the voice of the missionary, so often accused of being blinded by affection, may also be scorned and turn out to have been preaching in the desert, but, anyway, magis amica veritas.

38. A very different matter, with which we shall not here deal, is the physical endurance and useful labor of the Indians, which gave rise to the bringing of Negroes for the working of the mines and the sugar mills. Also different is the other question of malnutrition or incomplete nutrition and the degeneration produced by alcoholism, malaria, etc., although they have a bearing upon the main point we are dealing with here. Speaking of useful labor, I do note that, with regard to the Guaraúno, the Rev. Fr. Gaspar de Pinilla, a missionary among them, has often told me that in the handling of the axe, canoe paddle, and dragging of temiche /18/, he would not exchange them for any Negro or Creole, despite the fact that the Guaraúno are among those most accused of being slothful and lazy. The same can be said of the Pemón of the Gran Sabana with respect to traveling with burdens, construction of huts, etc., that is to say, everything that makes up their daily life and their own activity.

People who often speak, to relieve their overflowing impatience on trips, against the sluggishness, stoicity, laziness, etc., of the long-suffering Indians, two days later, when the discomforts have now disappeared, can be heard to outdo themselves in praise of how fine they are for carrying and a thousand other things.

/18 cont./

167 39. Also flour from a different sack, although tangentially
461 related to what we are dealing with, is the matter of a lack of initiative, lack of ambition, and a lack of appetite for certain temporal well-being, to which they are not accustomed and which consequently they do not miss which should not justly surprise us, since we should never forget that man is a creature of customs. In this sense it is true that the Indian, without realizing it, seems to repeat the adage, which the Holy Books put in the mouth of the fool: "Better is a handful with rest than both hands full with work and vexation of spirit. (Ecclesiastes IV, 6.)

40. For the correct solution of the problem stated, we must keep most in mind that the place where the Indians live ought to be pondered, since not in vain is it said to us that geography is one of the eyes necessary in every treatise on or study of man.

●147 a) Obviously in hot climates nobody can carry on the same activity as in cold ones. The wise Creator did not give to the animals of the tropics the same instinct for frugality or storing up that he gave to their congeners in other climates.

251 261 b) Tropical fruits, in general, cannot be stored, but must be consumed at once: thus the more or less remote tendency to gluttony.

251 263 c) The lack of salt similarly does not allow them to store up provisions of the meat of animals for a long time and thus to ration its consumption. Hung game /mosqueadas/ meat or meat cured only with fire does not last indefinitely like salted meat.

221 d) The nonexistence of seasons of strong contrast and well defined does not help man in these lands to precise calculation, thus great abundance and squandering may frequently be followed by great shortage.

433 e) The enormous isolation from centers of commerce, as a final evil, does not allow them to cultivate anything except what they themselves /19/ are going to consume. In general,

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Swimming.

526 The men and, particularly, the boys are very fond of swimming and [481] spend hours in the water. They paddle and splash around hilariously. It is pe- [147] culiar that when seriously attempting to go anywhere in the water, they swim below the surface, staying under as long as a minute and crossing any of the streams in Kamarata (up to perhaps twenty meters) without coming up for breath. The stroke is a rather formless but effective paddle. They tread water and remain at the surface in deep pools with ease, but I never saw them progress on the surface for more than one or two strokes. This is pure conjecture and not entirely probable, but it almost seems that they have learned swimming by imitating fishes and that it has not occurred to them that they might swim and breathe air at the same time.

Drunkenness.

273 Their herculean drinking bouts have been mentioned in connection with the dances that usually accompany them. Their alcoholic drinks are weak enough to require considerable perseverance in order to become drunken, but at these long parties most adults, men and women, do eventually achieve this [514] condition. Such a party becomes disgusting, from any sober point of view, particularly as vomiting is an expected interlude between rounds, but at the one [578] bout that I attended it did not become seriously disorderly. It is the highest tribute to Kamarakoto character that even with the whole crowd irresponsibly alcoholic, there was no quarreling, no abusive or even particularly noisy language, and that as much courtesy and thoughtfulness persisted as was at all con- [857] sistent with their condition. Children of all sizes attended and were not neglected but had an equally hilarious time without drinking.[228]

[452] Such excesses have their aftermath and the only time that I saw the Kamarakotos surly and cheerless was the day after a week of carousing, when all were suffering severely and had lost interest in life or the neighbors.

Incendiarism.

157 A curious practice not mentioned in previous pages is that of setting fires 372 in the dry season. The dry grass of the sabanas then becomes highly inflamma- 311 ble and the Indians delight in firing it, just to see it burn. Some tribes do this, ostensibly at least, to drive out animals when hunting or as a means of signaling,[229] but the Kamarakotos have, and give, no other reason than they enjoy 372 setting and watching the fires. Flying over the country in this season, rings of 311 fire can often be seen on every patch of sabana and after a party from the Caroni left us we could see columns of smoke in that direction for two days. The forest

228, 229 [see footnotes on p. 333, category 116 - Analyst]